DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 315 177 PS 018 570

AUTHOR Newman, Sally
TITLE Training Older Adults for New Careers.
INSTITUTION Pittsburgh Univ., PA. Center for Social and Urban Research.
PUB DATE Mar 89
NOTE 10p.; For related document, see PS 018 571. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Society on Aging (Washington, DC, March 1989).
AVAILABLE FROM University Center for Social and Urban Research, University of Pittsburgh, 811 William Pitt Union, Pittsburgh, PA 15260 (Publication No. 05-89-535, $1.30).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Child Caregivers; *Day Care; Early Childhood Education; Guidelines; *Intergenerational Programs; *Models; *Older Adults; Postsecondary Education; *Training

ABSTRACT

In this paper, the discussion concerns the trainig of older adults for work as child caregivers. Four questions are addressed: (1) Why is child care a work option for the older worker? (2) What is the target population of older persons interested in preparing for this field of work? (3) How can adult learner characteristics be integrated into a training program that prepares older persons for employment in child care? (4) What are the outcomes of a training program that prepares older persons for employment in child care? The training program discussed is a training model designed for low-income older persons that provides 90 hours of course work followed by subsidized 3-month, on-the-job training and subsequent placement as an unsubsidized child care aide. Outcomes of the training program were favorable. During the 10 weeks of training in each of six program cycles, there was 95 percent attendance. Of the 78 persons enrolled, 73 completed the training, received their certification, and attended graduation. Of the 73, a total of 47 continued to work in the child care field. (RH)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED315177

Generations Together

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

TRAINING OLDER ADULTS FOR NEW CAREERS

Presented at

The American Society on Aging

Washington, DC

March 1989

Prepared by

Sally Newman, Ph. D.

Senior Research Associate

and

Executive Director
Generations Together

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Sally Newman
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Publication Number
05-89-535

$1.30

University Center for Social and Urban Research
[redacted] • University of Pittsburgh • Pittsburgh, PA 15260 • (412) 648-7150

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

PS 018570

TRAINING OLDER ADULTS FOR NEW CAREERS

I will focus on training for a specific field that is emerging as a significant new career option for older persons, that is the field of child care. In considering training in preparation for work in child care the following questions will be addressed:

1. Why child care as a work option for the older worker?
2. Who is the target population of older persons interested in preparing for this field of work?
3. How are some adult learner characteristics integrated into a training program that prepares older persons for employment in child care?
4. What are some outcomes of a training program to prepare older persons for employment in child care?

1. Why child care as a work option for the older worker?

History suggests that the role of special nurturer for a family's young yields, for many older persons, a sense of usefulness, self-esteem and self respect essential to their psychological well-being. Because the geographic separation of families has reduced the opportunities for this family role to be realized (with 30% of the elders visiting their young families 2-3 times per year) older persons are seeking alternative opportunities that enable them to perform comparable roles in the community. Recent data suggests that involvement in child care work may be such an alternative. According to the New York Times (1987) individuals over 65 years of age account for 25% of the nation's workers in family day care, and 20% of the child care center or pre-school workers. With a significant number of older persons attracted to the field of child care as employment or as a possible career, it is timely to consider the training and preparation for this field of work.

2. Who is the target population?

Let us first consider what persons seem to be interested in this field and what are the job options for which they will need to be trained. Older

persons in child care represent a cross-section of the population with diverse socio-economic, ethnic and educational backgrounds. They are persons for whom child care may be viewed as a part time work experience or as a full time career track experience. Older persons considering the child care field may select from a variety of work options involving different degrees of commitment. These options include:

- family day care providers with part or full time commitment
- paid aides, typically with part time commitments, or
- child care teachers or administrators, typically with full time commitment

For each of these options technical training, certification and/or a degree may be required before employment is secured.

In this paper I will report on a training model that is designed for the largest group of older workers in child care, the aides. The model involves low income older persons, many of whom will be trained for their first job. For some this training is preparation for a new career.

A DESCRIPTION OF THE MODEL

The training model was designed as part of a Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) project for low income older persons interested in working in child care. The project consists of 90 hours of course work (training) followed by a subsidized three month on-the-job training experience and subsequent placement as an unsubsidized child care aide. The training component is conducted in the Education Department of a Liberal Arts College that has an accredited child care program. It consists of formal and informal learning experiences designed to respond to the needs of the adult learner. The training occurs in a variety of settings, the college classroom, the preschool classrooms of the college child care programs, and several other non-college related child care settings. The 90 hours of training occurs during a 10 week period with 9 hours of weekly scheduled classes. The

training involves formal lectures, question and answer periods, small group discussions, class projects, individual student reports, developing materials, role plays, observing classroom interaction, and media reviews.

The content includes theory and practice related to child care introducing topics such as the rationale for child care, child development issues, curriculum activities, discipline, safety, the role of the older adult in child care settings, and the creation of effective intergenerational partnerships in child care.

What are the learner characteristics to be considered in this training?

In preparing the course outline for this training model, basic adult learner characteristics were considered in relationship to the content, methodology and locus of the training. These characteristics as reported in the literature (Knowles, 1979, Lumsden, 1987, Stearns, 1987) appear to be essential for effective learning to occur, that is, learning that has a positive impact on the adult learner.

These learner characteristics and procedures for their integration into the training model follows:

1. Utilizing the older persons existing skills and knowledge:

   Where appropriate, such as the unit on child development, students discuss their own experiences in child rearing in relationship to current child development theories. Differences and similarities are discussed in the context of the times and setting (my child at home in 1940, a child in a child care environment, 1989).

2. Engaging older persons as active participants in their learning:

   Included in the learning modules are opportunities for students to problem-solve, to role play solutions to situations that they will encounter. For example, in the module on discipline, realistic classroom discipline problem situations are presented and students role play options for their solution.

3. Including experiences relevant to their future job placement:

Integrated into the modules are observations of the on-the-job training experience. The training involves reporting on what is observed, noting the differences and similarities in teaching styles, materials used, student behavior and overall classroom environments. These observations are valuable to the adult learners who begin to recognize the relationship between their existing skills and interest; their developing skills and anticipated responsibilities in a child care work environment.

4. Providing structured and definable experiences:

A syllabus is prepared that describes each class session in the context of goals, objectives, class format, expected student outcomes and homework assignments. Students receive a syllabus at the beginning of the 9 week training program on which expectations for each class are defined.

5. Providing varied learning experiences:

The training offers diversified classroom experiences including lectures, small group discussions, question and answer sessions, role play and simulation, developing classroom materials, media, and observations in a variety of child care sites. This diversity is essential to maintain a creative and vital environment and exposes the older adult to the diverse methods that will be available in a typical child care environment.

6. Building confidence and enhancing self esteem:

Students are encouraged to build upon their own life long experience and work skills as they learn about new theories of child development, new teaching methods and new materials. Classes involve the presentation of student ideas drawn their own experiences. These ideas are acknowledged and used to enrich the classes' understanding of the field of child care. Students complete homework assignments and take examinations that enable them to recognize their increased knowledge. Additionally, students participate in the on-the-job

training for 3 months at a selected child care site they soon learn that some of their adult characteristics such as patience, insight, earlier parenting and grandparenting experiences are positively responded to by teachers and students. They learn in the on-the-job training site that their presence is valued by the children and teachers.

7. Providing a supportive environment:

An esprit de corps among the students is established early in the training program as they recognize the commonalities and the universal desire to succeed. Success for each student means completing the training, receiving a certificate, and a position within easy access of their home. Additional support is provided by the faculty who are available after class to respond to questions and problems concerning the content, procedures or personal situations that seem to effect their learning. The faculty is invested in the older adult, arranging for appropriate on-the-job places that are potential employment sites for the older adult student.

8. Acknowledging the growth and learning of the participants:

A certificate of competence is awarded to the students at a formal graduation. The event and certification reaffirms the older adults' accomplishments and is, in effect, the rite of passage to the workplace.

A word about the college setting and the rigors of a formal course as a training model. The college setting establishes a credibility, respectability and social value to the learning experience. The rigor of the training (homework, exams) and the affirmation of achievement by certification of competencies by a college acknowledges to the older learner that he/she is capable of serious learning.

Outcomes

The outcomes of this training program are worthy of note as it may suggest a trend for training programs with similar orientation. During the ten weeks of training in each of the six cycles of this program there was 95% attendance. Of 78 persons who enrolled in the training in the six ten-week cycles, 73 completed the training, received their certification and attended graduations (and I might add with their families present to recognize their achievement). Of the 73 graduates 47 are working in child care.

In conclusion, I would like to present a summary of the information collected in response to an evaluation completed by the students at the conclusion of a training cycle in 1987. This information, which is typical of earlier evaluations, is an indicator of the interest for focused career learning for an untapped population of older adults.

REFERENCES

Knowles, M., The Adult Learner: A Neglected Species. 1979. Gulf Publishing Company: Houston, Paris, London, Tokyo.

Lumsden, D. How Adults Learn. 1987. Generations, American Society on Aging: San Francisco.

New York Times. December 15, 1987 Wanted: child-care workers, age 55 and up.

Sterns, H. & Domspki, D. 1989. Training and developing the older worker: implications for human resource management. In press. In Fourteen Steps to Managing an Aging Workforce. Academic Press. New York.

1987 Questionnaire Summary
[N = 8; (3) respondents did not answer all questions]

Table 1: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

AGE:	50-60 years	= 2
	61-70	= 6
SEX:	Female	= 7
EDUCATION:	High School	= 6
	Tech/Prof School	= 1
MARITAL STATUS:	Married	= 3
	Single	= 1
	Separated	= 2
	Divorced	= 1

YEARS OF FORMAL WORK EXPERIENCE:

Range from 11 to 50 years Avg = 29.3

Table 2: TRAINING EVALUATION

A. How easy or difficult did you find the following?

	very easy	somewhat easy	somewhat difficult	very difficult
The text that was used	1	7		
Written assignments (homework)	1	7		
In-class work	2	6		

B. Length of Training:

Too Long	Just Right	Too Short
	7	

C. Content of Training:

Very Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Very Unsatisfactory
3	5		

D. Daily Schedule:

Too Spread Out	Just Right	Too Tight
	7	

E. Course requirements:

Very Fair	Fair	Unfair	Very Unfair
6	1		

Table 3: CLASSROOM METHODS

What three classroom teaching methods did you find most useful?

Discussion	7
Guest Speakers	7
Reviews of Tests	4
Lectures	3
Small Group Work	3

How adequate was the classwork in preparing you for child care employment?

Very Adequate	Adequate	Inadequate	Very Inadequate
5	3		

How would you rate the number of practicum sessions?

Too Many	Just Right	Too Few
	8	

How would you rate the supervision you received during the practicum?

Too Much	Just Right	Too Little
	8	

How adequate was the practicum experience in preparing you for actual child care work?

Very Adequate	Adequate	Inadequate	Very Inadequate
4	4		

How much did you learn during training in the following areas?

	Many new Things	Some new Things	Nothing New
a) how young children develop	4	3	
b) how to discipline preschoolers	4	4	
c) health & safety rules for children	4	3	
d) communication skills	3	4	
e) preparation for employment	4	4	
f) classroom arrangement & management	4	3	
g) scheduling & activity planning for young children	3	4	